

Markell Requests Federal Disaster Relief For Snow

Disaster Declaration Would Allow Federal Reimbursement For February Snowstorm Costs

Governor Jack Markell on Thursday asked the President to declare that a disaster occurred in Delaware during the twin February snowstorms, paving the way for state and local governments and other agencies to be reimbursed by the federal government for storm related costs. During the storm, Markell spoke with Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, who agreed that the storms should be treated as one emergency event. The application for disaster relief the Governor submitted today reflects that fact.

A preliminary tally of costs to state and local governments for the February storms found at least \$8.8 million in costs, with \$6.7 million for snow removal alone. That amount meets the Federal Emergency Management Agency standards for public disaster assistance of \$3.8 million in costs split among the state and counties for a statewide declaration.

If granted, the disaster status would make the state and local governments eligible for reimbursements of 75 percent of their documented costs. Schools and some nonprofits that were involved in storm response or sustained damage would also be eligible to apply for reimbursement.

“Delaware’s public servants and many others worked tirelessly to respond to these snow storms of historic proportions, and they did so effectively,” Gov. Markell said. “We did what needed to be done to keep Delawareans safe and get the state back on its feet, regardless of the cost. The federal disaster process may allow us to recoup some of those expenses, and we certainly are pursuing that option during these tough budget times.”

Among the details compiled by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency and included in the Governor’s application are:

- The official snow total from the National Climactic Data Center for the Feb. 5-6 storm for New Castle County was 25.8 inches, shattering the previous single event record for that county of 19 inches. Although not record-breaking, the amounts recorded for Kent County (23.41 inches) and Sussex County (21 inches) during that time were also high.
- When combined with the second storm on Feb. 9-10, all three counties in Delaware received more than 30 inches of snow in less than a week.
- At the peak of the second storm, more than 86,000 electricity customers in the state were without power, and utility crews from out of state were in Delaware during both storms to help restore service.
- 395 members of the Delaware National Guard were activated for storm response and more than 150 Guard vehicles were involved in emergency transportation and rescue missions.
- 120 people spent time in emergency shelters opened in Kent and Sussex counties.

- Because of the back-to-back storms, the state emergency operation center near Smyrna was activated and staffed round the clock from Friday, Feb. 5 until Sunday, Feb. 14, and the Wilmington, New Castle, Kent and Sussex emergency centers operated for similar time periods as well.

The Governor received hundreds of emails from state employees, first responders and the people they helped, sharing moving stories of the state coming together to combat the effects of the historic storm. He has shared several of those stories here: <http://governor.blogs.delaware.gov/>.